

### WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

### HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### WHY CLOSE A CHILDCARE PROGRAM?

The decision to temporarily dismiss childcare programs is considered on a case-by-case basis, and in consultation and coordination with program administrators and state and local health officials. If your childcare program is closed, please stay home. It's out of an abundance of caution that we decided to close programs to prevent other children from getting sick in a short amount of time. While children typically experience only mild illness from COVID-19, staying home helps prevent spread to those who are more vulnerable, which includes anyone older than 60, those with underlying health conditions, and those who are immunocompromised. Every year we see some childcare programs close during flu season because of high rates of illness. This allows children to remain apart from the school environment and lets facilities do deeper cleaning and disinfecting so the environment is healthier when children return. It's **CRITICAL** that people **stay** home. This is not a vacation for children. If a daycare is closed in connection with exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case, children should not go out in public places, visiting the movies or taking trips. They should stay home.

### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19?

Parents should take everyday preventive measures to help protect their family from the spread of COVID-19:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Encourage respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Encourage frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Keep your child at home if sick with any illness.** If your child is sick, keep them at home. If their symptoms worsen, contact your healthcare provider.
- **Be prepared if your child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed.** Talk with your employer about sick leave and telework options in case you need to stay home with your child. Consider planning for alternate childcare arrangements.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, work stations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label.

## COVID-19 Guidance for Childcare Programs

### WHAT CAN PROGRAM FACILITATORS DO TO PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19?

- **Encourage respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Encourage frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Send ill students home** according to your program's usual policies. Keep ill students away from well children and staff until they are able to leave. Recommend that ill children seek care from a healthcare provider.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, work stations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label. Here is a list of EPA-approved registered disinfectant products: [www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2).
- **Monitor absenteeism in your program** and report suspected outbreaks or large increases in absenteeism to the local health department.

Guidance issued March 12, 2020, by Governor Eric J. Holcomb encourages childcare facilities to institute social distancing and minimize large gatherings. Temporary suspension of operations should be done in consultation with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and ISDH in the instance of documented community spread.

### WHAT SHOULD A PARENT DO IF THEIR CHILD'S CHILDCARE PROGRAM IS CLOSED?

- **Keep track of program closure updates.**
- **Talk to your childcare program about options for digital and distance learning.**
- **Keep children at home if your childcare program is dismissed to help slow the spread of COVID-19.**
- **Seek guidance from your program administrator to determine when children and staff should return to the facility.** Childcare program closures will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific situation in your community. Be prepared for closure durations that could last several days.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS ILL?

- If your child is ill, please keep him or her at home, watch for symptoms and contact your healthcare provider if symptoms become worse. Please call the provider in advance so the proper precautions can be taken.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The ISDH call center for healthcare providers and members of the public who have concerns about COVID-19 is staffed 24/7; call toll-free: 877-826-0011.

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available below.

- CDC COVID-19 guidance for childcare programs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- ISDH guidance for home care: [https://www.in.gov/isdh/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_Home\\_Care\\_2.28.20.pdf](https://www.in.gov/isdh/files/IN_COVID-19_Home_Care_2.28.20.pdf)
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>